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CORRESPONDENCE

REPLY TO REVIEW OF THE SHACKFORD-JUDSON RHETORIC

Editor of the School Review:

In the December, 1909, issue of the *School Review* appeared a review of the Shackford-Judson *Composition—Rhetoric—Literature*, published by Messrs. Benjamin H. Sanborn and Company. Since the review was characterized by expression of personal opinion unsupported by argument, and, a more serious matter, by several misstatements of fact, I venture to ask you to print in an issue of the *School Review* a correction of the reviewer's errors, in order that a book designed for use in schools may have just and fair treatment in regard to facts. Let teachers compare review with book.

1. The reviewer says:

Though we take the words of the authors that they do not intend that the book should be used as it is written, that the teacher is advised to hop, skip, and jump into whatever part seems advisable, yet we are constrained to say that only the wisest teachers of English may, by kangarooish jumping, get into parts where there will be practical work.

The Shackford-Judson *Rhetoric* says (p. vii): "The plan is not meant to be rigid, but one easily adaptable to the needs, or the preferences, of individual teachers, who may alter the order of work by substituting one chapter for another."

2. The reviewer says:

Here (chap. iii) is a dissertation on the mechanical details of preparing a manuscript, but not a single topic is assigned for writing or speaking. This surely is a Barmecide feast! So far pupil and teacher have covered seventy pages of the book without wetting a pen or moistening their tongues in actual composition, either written or oral.

The Shackford-Judson *Rhetoric* contains two pages and one-half devoted to the mechanical details of preparing a manuscript, followed by matter relating to spelling and punctuation. Such matter is so arranged as to be used by the teacher when he chooses. On pp. 9, 24, 46, 54, 57, 68, 69, 70, are exercises which may be written or oral, as the teacher prefers. Moreover, intelligent teachers will have classes read and discuss in class some of the matter on pp. 1-70.

3. The reviewer says:

What shall we say about a book that asks a pupil in the second year to study a translation from Vergil, or presumes that all pupils taking English are also taking French and German—as well as Vergil? This is probably one of the spots that should be leaped!

Shackford-Judson *Rhetoric*, pp. 256-57, contains an exercise based upon what is not a stupendous strain to the ordinary intellect, namely, the correction of bad translations of the opening fourteen *words* of the *Æneid*, seven *words* of French, and fifteen *words* of German. The originals are followed immediately by translations.

4. The reviewer says:

We are at a loss to know, however, why they selected Milton's *Areopagitica* and *Lycidas* for extended analysis. Neither selection is extensively read in the secondary schools—certainly not the masterpiece on the liberty of unlicensed printing.

Answer: *Lycidas* is usually read by students preparing for college and is certainly widely read by other students. Only school-superintendents and publishers are prepared to state whether or not *Lycidas* is read "extensively." On p. 413, Shackford-Judson *Rhetoric*, the following is said regarding the *Areopagitica*: "Study the following brief, which is based upon a famous oration by John Milton. This outline does not follow all the intricacies of Milton's argument, but presents the most important details. Read the brief carefully, without reference to the oration itself." The student is being trained, not to make outlines of arguments already written, but to outline an argument before he writes the formal manuscript of it.

The reviewer says:

Our complaint of the book must close with disclosing our wonder at the careless proofreading on the part of the authors and the printers. Were we to advise those most concerned in the progress of the book we should say: Withdraw it from the market; revise it thoroughly; and reprint it with utmost care.

The Shackford-Judson *Rhetoric*, in the first edition, was undeniably injured by the presence of some twelve errata, most of them omissions of page-references, due to the printers' failure to note the authors' corrections. That a list of errata was appended to the book, and that the errata were of the nature of mechanical omissions, not of misspelling and more serious blunders, are facts which should have been acknowledged by the reviewer before he condemned the volume.

Other matters which concern the reviewer's personal theories do not come within the scope of the document, which aims merely at a correct presentation of truth, not only for the sake of the volume in question, but for the sake of the reviewing of textbooks in general.

Thanking you for your courtesy in allowing me space in which to present my case, I am

Very truly yours,

MARTHA HALE SHACKFORD

WELLESLEY COLLEGE
March 29, 1910